

HELICOPTER OPERATION & COMMISSIONER QUESTIONS - 7/14/2022

As part of the O&M activities, Vineyard Wind will base its helicopter support at a general aviation airport in reasonable proximity to the offshore wind farm area. The Martha's Vineyard Airport is a Commercially Certificated Public Use Airport and has been identified as the location for the helicopter support. Helicopters can be used when rough seas and weather limit or preclude the use of other means of access offshore as well as for fast response visual inspections and repair activities, as needed.

The supporting helicopter will be used to access the project year-round based on weather conditions and maintenance requirements. In 2021, the airport totaled around 43,000 operations including landing and take offs. Vineyard Wind's operations will be a small fraction of the existing operation. The project estimates on average two to four round trips a day contingent on weather, seasonal variability, and safety.

In an effort to be good community members and reduce potential impacts from helicopter operations, Vineyard Wind and the helicopter operator will be a part of the airport's voluntary *Noise Abatement 'Fly Friendly' Program*¹. The helicopter operator will also execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Martha's Vineyard Airport and with FAA Contract Control Services regarding noise mitigation efforts to best reduce potential helicopter operation impacts, subject to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations.²

Unlike familiar helicopter operations which are often low flying for purposes of medical activities, news footage, sight-seeing, etc., the project's supporting helicopter, due to its dedicated purpose of servicing the offshore wind farm, will reach higher altitudes above the airport area prior to proceeding offshore. The helicopter flight path, as mentioned above, will be agreed with the FAA Contract Control Services through the MOU with efforts to avoid flying over any residential areas when safe to do so. These efforts help minimize noise impacts on the surrounding areas, especially when compared to the noise of a typical fixed wing aircraft.

When looking at environmental considerations of helicopter use, the Vineyard Wind 1 project has demonstrated that, without any additional mitigation, direct carbon dioxide emissions from construction, operation, and decommissioning of the project would be offset after less than five months of operation by displacing electricity produced by fossil fuel power plants. This carbon reduction is equivalent to taking 325,000 cars off the street annually. Finally, one of the main benefits of utilizing the helicopter is that it will decrease the use of vessels and therefore decrease risk to the endangered North Atlantic Right Whale population.

¹ <https://mvyairport.com/noise-abatement-fly-friendly/>

² The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) prohibits mandated restrictions of flight paths, hours of operation, and undue prohibition of open access to airports. Martha's Vineyard Airport as a Commercially Certificated Public Use Airport is prohibited by federal law from levying fines, restricting hours of operation, or restricting access to the airport (or the route by which an aircraft has access to the airport) to aid with noise abatement.

Response to Commissioner Questions 7/12/2022

1. Does the applicant's answer mean that no helicopter flights would be scheduled unless "weather conditions and accessibility" dictate it?

The supporting helicopter will be used to access the project year-round based on weather conditions and maintenance requirements. Weather conditions and accessibility dictate whether it is safely possible to schedule a helicopter flight. Helicopter flights will be planned when weather conditions and accessibility allow safe helicopter operations.

2. In this context, what does "accessibility" mean?

In this case, it means the ability of the helicopter to fly safely. For example, flights will not be conducted on days with very high wind speed or low visibility.

3. What "weather conditions" would give rise to the need to use the helicopter in lieu of the ships based at Vineyard Haven? Specifically, based on the applicant's experience elsewhere, what wind, wave and other environmental factors come into play and what thresholds has the applicant experienced elsewhere which suggest use of a helicopter? Based on historic weather conditions for the area, how often would the situation arise where the helicopter would be needed?

The helicopter is not intended to operate in lieu of vessels, however they will work together to complement one another creating an integrated solution.

The helicopter may be used in lieu of vessels based at Vineyard Haven on days where:

- a) the crew transfer vessels cannot transfer personnel due to environmental conditions like high waves above 3-6 ft in height
- b) travel time by crew transfer vessel is extended due to obligation for reduced speeds to protect the endangered North Atlantic Right Whales
- c) quick response is needed, or crew transfer vessel capacity isn't sufficient
- d) the helicopter is the safer means of access at the time for overall employee safety.

4. Given the applicant's prior experience and its knowledge of the Vineyard Wind development's exposure to weather conditions, what annual/seasonal frequency of flights can be reasonably expected to be needed for "weather conditions"?

The project estimates flights could occur up to approximately 300 days/year based on historical weather data. The actual number of days of operation will vary depending on maintenance activities, weather and accessibility conditions, safety circumstances, and the ability of vessels based at Vineyard Haven to operate.

5. How many trips does the applicant estimate would be required per day in the event of reliance on the helicopter for access?

The project estimates on average two to four round trips a day contingent on weather, safety, and project demands.

6. How often do the turbines require "scheduled" maintenance?

The scheduled maintenance occurs annually.

7. What is the applicant's experience with the frequency of "unscheduled" maintenance?

The frequency of unscheduled maintenance is very difficult to estimate, but based on experience, the project expects between 5 and 10 events per wind turbine per year. Each event requires one or more visits by vessel or helicopter, depending on the failure that occurs. The goal of the scheduled maintenance program is to minimize unscheduled maintenance events.

8. In regard to truck traffic, how many trips would occur per day, and how might they be scheduled throughout the day? How would this impact peak-hour traffic for the Barnes Road/Edgartown-WT Road intersection?

The truck traffic data was submitted with the comprehensive traffic information. Truck traffic will be scheduled to avoid peak-hour traffic. The project has assumed 1 delivery daily to be conservative. The deliveries to the hangar will primarily be small deliveries from the O&M Building and are expected to utilize a standard pick-up truck.

9. Please show potential flight paths to/from the airport and the conditions under which each (if there is more than one) would apply.

The helicopter operator will execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Martha's Vineyard Airport and with FAA Contract Control Services including the flight path and conditions regarding noise mitigation to best reduce helicopter operation potential impacts, subject to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations.

10. Statement regarding the existing hangar building materials.

The existing building is not re-usable due to the reasons outlined in the provided 'Existing Hangar Stamped Structural Evaluation', dated 04-1-2021. The building will be demolished, and all steel and debris will be separated, and appropriate components will be scrapped and recycled at a proper recycling facility by the selected contractor.